

A Sketch of the Life of Alfred Rasicot

Compiled by daughters: Clara Jane Rasicot Brunt
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Alfred Rasicot was born March 21, 1830 in Chambley, Quebec Province, Canada, being the third child of Dominique Rasicot and Marie Millet. His ancestors on his father's side came from France about 1715 and on his mother's side about 1611. According to Tanquay, a French Canadian writer, who compiled the origin of French families in Canada, the Rasicots came from southwestern France, Ville de Chateau, Gontier in Mayenne, France. They were of royal birth and feudal land owners.

Jacques Rasicot (the name was spelled Racicot until the family moved to the United States) was the third great-grandfather of Alfred Rasicot and came from France in 1611, settling in Quebec.

The descendants moved further up the St Lawrence River, nearer Montreal and were pioneers in the different sections in which they lived.

Dominique Rasicot, the father of Alfred Rasicot, was a blacksmith by trade and was doing well in the little town of Chambley, but had an ambition to acquire land, and when Alfred was a small boy, the family moved on a farm forty miles away, in what was termed the "wilderness." This land was covered by a growth of large trees and thick underbrush, which had to be cleared off before the land could be farmed. The family underwent many hardships and all the children had to assist with the clearing of the land.

Alfred was a very plucky little boy, and he used to tell his children about an experience he had in chasing a deer. His older brothers started to chase a deer in the woods. Alfred was barefooted, but he joined in the chase and kept up with his brothers, who chased the deer all day. When they came home in the evening, Alfred's feet were bleeding and he had torn the nail off his big toe. Another time when he was 10 years old, his father promised to take him on a trip to Montreal, a distance of thirty miles. They were to start at three o'clock in the morning and skate on the river. Alfred was awake the next morning at the appointed time and got the thrill of his life in the big city at the end of his journey.

A few years later the family, now number eight children, six boys and two girls, emigrated to the United States. They settle in Clinton County, New York, which was then on the frontier. Of course, none of the family could speak English and it became

Alfred was very ambitious to learn and went to live with a minister and his family, earning his board by working late and early and attending school. He got along very well until a little difficulty arose. The minister and his wife were very proud people and the wife would arise at three o'clock on Monday mornings to do her washing so her neighbors would not know she did her own washing. Alfred always got up and put on the wash water. One night the minister told him to get his horse ready, but it was on wash day and the lady became angry because he did not get on the wash water first. She scolded the boy, who replied that he would get the water on as soon as he got the horse ready. The lady called her husband and told him that Alfred had been uncivil to her. The minister came out and gave the boy a good shaking up, which made him feel that he had been treated unjustly, and he started for home, a distance of twenty miles. The minister tried to call him back, but Alfred refused to come back and thus ended his school for that year. He later, attended an English school, and also, a French school, where he learned to read and speak English as well as to read and write Parisian French.

In 1856 the Rasicot family moved to Morrison County, Minnesota, and settled on the land at Belle Prairie. Here, they again, pioneered in a new country, and had to contend with grass-hoppers and savage Indians. Alfred served in that state's militia for protection against the Indians. While living here he served a country recorded for Morrison County. He procured a four-hundred acre farm and was doing very well. He was able to send his unfortunate deaf and dumb brother, Vital, to a deaf mute school in New York City to be educated.

Not long after this the civil war broke out and Alfred offered his services to his country, but on account of rheumatism, he was unable to pass the health examination. His brother, William, served in the war to its close, and on his return, he obtained the farm of Alfred where he lived and took care of his parents until their deaths.

In 1865, Alfred Rasicot decided to go to Virginia City, Montana, where there was a gold rush on, this being near the famous Alder Gulch. At this time every man leaving the States had to have a permit from the government on account of the Civil War and drafting was still in progress.

He accordingly obtained his permit and crossed the plains by team and prairie schooner. Alfred procured some land near the thriving mining town of Virginia City, and bought some pedigreed horses and dairy cattle. Although, he was a bachelor, he was very neat and clean and a good butter-maker. Prices were good and a ready market was had for all kinds of vegetable, butter, meat, etc so he did very well.

A few years passed and he had many an Indian scare while freighting his products. The Blackfoot Indians were often on the war-path and frequently killed the early settlers and stole their cattle and horses. On one of these trips Alfred became interested in the farming land of south-eastern Idaho. In about 1870, he sold his farm in Montana and bought a large ranch on Battle Creek, near Franklin, Idaho, the oldest town in the state. Here, he went into the cattle and horse business on quite a large scale

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which was soon about the largest in the valley. Many a social and dances were held in this home. Martha Rasicot was a cultured woman of her times and had bought her old fashioned organ on which she used to play and sing to her own accompaniment.

During the panic of 1893 and after the shops had been moved away, prices were very low and the market poor. Again Alfred decided to try out a new place. However, this time, he did not sell the land, but rented it out, keeping his home. This time he went to Anaconda, Montana, which was a lively smelter town, and started a dairy business a few miles our of town. His family now consisted of three sons and two daughters. They lost two sons, one a baby and the other a son of thirteen years. The younger sons were both born in Idaho Falls. The older children were now able to help, and he prospered to the extent that he was able to pay off the mortgage on his farm in Idaho. The country was again prosperous and after years of worry and hardship, he could now enjoy life with his debts all pain and money in the bank.

He lived happily enjoying the respect of everybody in the community. In 1909 Mrs. Rasicot died which was a great blow to Alfred in his old age. He lived about a year and a half after the death of his wife, and during that time did considerable traveling. He spent one summer back in his old home town, Little Falls, Minnesota and in St Paul and other places visiting his relatives.

The last winter of his life, he spend some time in California with his oldest daughter, Clara, who was spending the winter there. Alfred Rasicot passed away April 25th, 1911, surrounded by all five children. He contributed much to the progress and growth of the many communities in which he pioneered.

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